

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1 and 15 are amended and claims 2, 21 and 22 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter disclosed therein.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner RoDee during the January 5, 2006 personal interview are gratefully appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 9, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The cancellation of claims 21 and 22 renders their rejection moot. Moreover, as agreed during the personal interview, the subject matter of claim 9 is supported by the priority document, Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-62888, a verified translation of which is submitted to the Patent Office for the Examiner's convenience. Moreover, the specification is amended to incorporate the relevant subject matter from the priority document that supports the subject matter of claim 9. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, as agreed during the personal interview, the subject matter of claim 9 is now supported in the specification. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6, 8-15, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hayase et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,002,903) in view of Takenouchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,273,852); claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hayase in view of Takenouchi and further in view of Diamond ("Handbook of Imaging Materials"); and claims 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hayase in view of Takenouchi and further in view of Heeks et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,336,026). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As agreed during the personal interview, none of the applied references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest an image forming method that includes developing an electrostatic latent image formed on an electrophotographic photoreceptor with a toner, wherein a surface of the toner for electrostatic latent image development has at least one kind of particles selected from metal oxide particles and metal nitride particles, and wherein a total amount of the metal oxide particles and/or metal nitride particles added is 0.1 to 10% by mass relative to the toner, and the ratio of metal oxide particles and/or metal nitride particles having a particle size of no more than 0.03 μm relative to the total amount of the metal oxide particles and/or metal nitride particles is in the following range: $0.01 \leq (\text{amount of particles having a particle size of } 0.03 \mu\text{m or less})/(\text{total amount of metal oxide particles and/or metal nitride particles}) \leq 0.8$, as recited in independent claims 1 and 15.

Thus, independent claims 1 and 15, and their dependent claims, are patentable over the applied references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 3-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Verified Translation of Priority Document JP 2003-62888

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